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NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE DAILY CABLE

Monday 12 June 1978 CG NIDC 78/136C

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NATIONAL SECURITY INFORMATION
Unauthorized Disclosure Subject to Criminal Sanctions

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National Intelligence Daily Cable for Monday, 12 June 1978

The NID Cable is for the purpose of informing senior US officials.

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PANAMA: Arias Warmly Welcomed

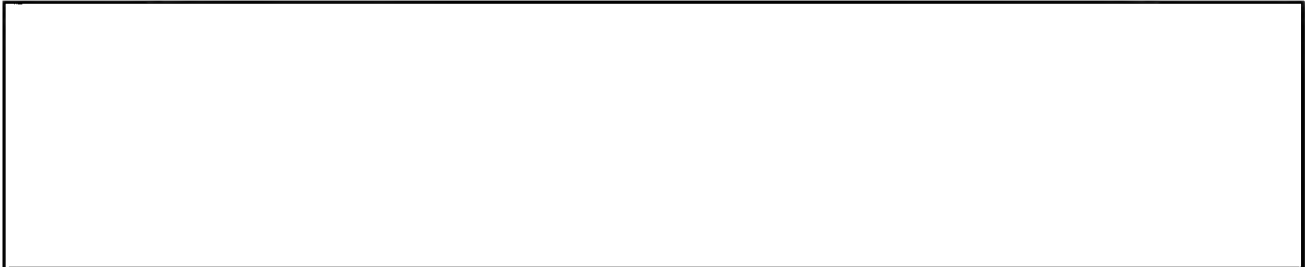
25X1 [REDACTED] //The enthusiastic reception for Panamanian ex-President Arias on Saturday will probably encourage him to try to mobilize antigovernment sentiment sooner rather than later. It is still too early, however, to estimate his political strength, and he faces substantial problems in attempting to oust Chief of Government Torrijos. His return does inject a new and unpredictable element into the Panamanian political scene.//

25X1 [REDACTED] //Arias was warmly welcomed by 50,000 to 100,000 people; he responded with a scathing personal attack on General Torrijos, whom he labeled a "psychopath," "supreme traitor," and "tyrant." Although Torrijos was clearly his main target, he also attacked the canal treaties as opposed to the national interest and extremely harmful to sovereignty.//

25X1 [REDACTED] //The crowd, although boisterous, was peaceful. Arias is probably still Panama's most charismatic figure, but the turnout was also boosted by the sheer novelty of the first real political rally in almost a decade.//

25X1 [REDACTED] //The former President faces some substantial obstacles in maneuvering against Torrijos. Foremost is the longstanding enmity between Arias and the National Guard. Notwithstanding his passing praise on Saturday for some "worthy units" in the military, Arias' main problem will be to weaken the unity of the National Guard hierarchy.//

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25X1 [redacted] //In response to several editorials, Arias' party has now publicly promised not to interfere with President Carter's visit, although the political fallout from Saturday's rally seems likely to generate some antigovernment activity prior to the treaty ceremonies Friday. [redacted]

AFRICA: Peacekeeping Force

25X1 [redacted] *The reaction so far of African states to the formation of an inter-African peacekeeping force for Zaire reflects considerable confusion. African leaders generally approved of the rescue effort in Shaba--which most viewed as a reasonable Western response to a Zairian request--but fewer have responded favorably to the multilateral African force recently introduced into Shaba. It is clear that very few African governments would support a permanent force that might be called on to intervene in future crises in any of their countries. The absence of a consensus among the Africans about such a force, the nonparticipation of English-speaking countries, and the appearance of Western initiative in the peacekeeping scheme tarnish it from the outset.*

25X1 [] The Africans are dividing primarily along linguistic lines. French-speaking countries are generally more receptive to the concepts of military collaboration and of intervention forces for crisis areas than are the non-French-speaking states. This differentiation may reflect cultural conditioning, since it fails to follow political lines.

25X1 [] The West African countries contributing forces to the current peacekeeping operation--Senegal, Ivory Coast, Gabon, and Togo--all have close ties to France and are widely regarded among Africans to be tools of Paris. Morocco--the major participant--is also viewed as an outsider serving as a French proxy. The composition of this inter-African force thus sets it up as a target for those prone to charge that Western imperialism is a continuing threat in Africa.

25X1 [] Several of the larger English-speaking countries have weighed in on the issue of neocolonialism, and on the broader issue of big-power intervention in Africa. Tanzanian President Nyerere on Thursday charged in a public statement that the events of the past few weeks have again demonstrated that although the West Europeans officially recognize the independence of African states, they have not yet conceded to the Africans the right to develop their countries and continent in their interests.

25X1 [] He said that "the habit of regarding Africa as an appendage of Western Europe has not been broken" and claimed that those who seek to initiate a Pan-African force are not interested in the freedom of Africa, but in its domination.

25X1 [] Kenyan spokesmen have referred to the "impudence" of the West and have shown resentment over what appears to them to be a European conclusion that Africans are incapable of handling a situation themselves and therefore must have a European solution forced upon them. Nigerian Foreign Ministry officials have condemned French and US intervention in Africa and

reportedly contend that the US is introducing superpower conflict to the continent and risks African questioning of the sincerity of its initiatives on southern Africa.

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[] The Arabic-speaking states along the northern tier of Africa have reacted along predictable political lines. Sudan, while sympathetic to the deployment of the peacekeeping force to Zaire, has avoided taking a public position because, as host of the summit meeting of the Organization of African Unity next month, it wishes to remain aloof from any controversy.

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[] The Africans have frequently raised the point that multilateral military operations should take place in an OAU context, if at all. Since its founding in 1963, the OAU has periodically approached and then backed away from the concept of creating an African defense force.

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[] During the OAU summit African leaders may conduct an acrimonious debate on the subject, but the OAU generally avoids taking decisions on divisive issues. Reaffirmations of the recognized OAU principles of African unity and of non-intervention in the internal affairs of African states are the most likely outcome.

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[] US backing for a controversial and European-inspired inter-African force could have a harmful effect on other important African issues. Zambian President Kaunda has commented that overexposure on Shaba could undermine US effectiveness in dealing with Rhodesia and Namibia.

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[] Nyerere's strong attack on the peacekeeping effort in Zaire could indicate that he and the other presidents of the frontline states may be rethinking their approach to southern African problems in which the US is involved. In the aftermath of the Angolan civil war, they originally sought out US assistance in resolving the Rhodesian problem but they made it clear that US help was desired only if Rhodesia was treated as an African problem.

[redacted] At that time, Nyerere cautioned the US about great-power involvement in Africa and warned that Rhodesia should not be seen as a confrontational situation between the US and USSR and Cuba. The government-controlled press in Tanzania charged yesterday that US statements about Cuban involvement in Zaire had "given comfort" to the "racist rulers" of Rhodesia and South Africa. [redacted]

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Ethiopia-USSR

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[REDACTED] //A high-level Ethiopian delegation left last Thursday for talks in the USSR, according to the US Embassy in Addis Ababa. The delegation includes the ruling military council's secretary general, its member in charge of foreign affairs, its deputy member in charge of defense, and Minister of Defense Brigadier General Tilahun.//

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[REDACTED] //The purpose of the visit is unknown, but matters for discussion could include the question of Ethiopian payment for Soviet weapons and Soviet policy toward Eritrea. The Ethiopians and Soviets might also discuss making further attempts through East Germany to convince Eritrean secessionists to negotiate a settlement with Addis Ababa involving something less than full independence for Eritrea. [REDACTED]

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